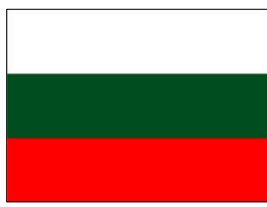


# Bulgaria



**Geography:** Bulgaria shares borders with Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Greece, and Turkey. Two mountain ranges and two great valleys mark the topography of Bulgaria, a country the size of Tennessee and situated on the Black Sea. The Maritsa is Bulgaria's principal river, and the Danube also flows through the country. Bulgaria's land is fertile, producing a large variety of crops such as wheat, corn, barley, tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes and cucumbers etc. The central plains of Bulgaria are home to the famous 'Valley of the Roses' which produces a high quality 'attar' (the essential oil extracted from the petals of various types of roses) much coveted by the global markets, and the festival associated with the rose petal harvest is a major tourist attraction in early June. The country is blessed with approximately 500 mineral springs, many thermal, with a vast range of healing properties. Bulgaria also has over 380 km of coastline offering everything from rugged secluded beaches to fully developed, highly commercialized resorts, such as Golden Sands and Sunny Beach. The Capital of Bulgaria is Sofia. Bulgaria is seven hours ahead of EST; four hours ahead of GMT.



**History:** Bulgaria has a long and rich history. The Thracians were the first people to settle the land, and archeologists today are still discovering traces of that ancient civilization. The first Bulgarian state was formed in AD 681, uniting the Bulgars with the local Slavic people. Christianity was adopted as Bulgaria's state religion in 864. Following a Russian victory in a war with the Ottoman Empire, part of Bulgaria was declared as an autonomous principality in 1878. A year later, Bulgaria adopted a democratic constitution. Bulgaria became a fully independent nation in 1908. In the early 20th century, Bulgaria became involved in the Balkan Wars, aligning with Greece and Serbia to win

freedom for Thrace and Macedonia. Bulgaria later entered into World War I as a German ally. Bulgaria's great losses in the war lead to political and economic instability. Bulgaria had yet to recover from previous losses before entering World War II, allied with the Axis Powers. However, Bulgaria remarkably managed to protect its Jewish population of about 50,000 from the Holocaust by refusing to deport the country's Jewish citizens to concentration camps. In the aftermath of World War II, Bulgaria was placed under Soviet control. The country was declared a people's republic in 1946 and soon after communism took control of the state. By the late 1980s opposition to the communist rule was growing. Bulgaria adopted a new constitution and held its first democratic Parliamentary elections in 1991. In 2004, Bulgaria joined NATO, and in 2007 they joined the European Union. Bulgaria has strong diplomatic ties to the United States.

**Language:** Bulgarian (Български) is a Southern Slavic language with about 12 million speakers mainly in Bulgaria, but also in Ukraine, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Greece, Romania, Canada, USA, Australia, Germany and Spain. Bulgarian is mutually intelligible with Macedonian, and fairly closely related to Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Slovenian.

**The Climate:** Bulgaria's climate is temperate continental with some Mediterranean influence. There are four distinct seasons and on the whole the weather is easily and accurately predicted. Long, hot summers and cold snowy winters are the norm.

**Cuisine:** Bulgarian cuisine is often described as tasty, spicy, hearty and good. Due to the geographical position of the country and long history, Bulgarian food is a mixture between the best parts of the Slavonic, Greek and Turkish cuisines. Cheese, yogurt and spices are popular staples to the Bulgarian diet. The main meal is eaten in the middle of the day. Dinner is a social occasion, with dancing in many restaurants. Meals include meat, potatoes and cheese. Fruit is particularly good and cheap throughout the year. There is a wide variety of national dishes, as well as Western European standard dishes, which can be chosen on the spot at any restaurant. All good hotels have restaurants and there are many attractive folk-style restaurants and cafes throughout the country.

**Children Available:** Bulgarian children available for international adoption reside in orphanages. They are between ages 1-18 years of age, though the majority of children in need are ages 4 and up. Sibling groups are available. They are of Roma or Turkish heritage. The majority of the children have dark eyes, olive skin and shiny dark hair.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Prospective adoptive parents may be married or single. Adoptive parents must be at least fifteen years older than their adoptive children, but no more than forty-five years older.

**Time Frame:** After dossier submission, a referral may be immediate for an older child or a child with special needs. For younger children, it may take 12- 36 months prior to referral. Once match occurs, the adoptive family visits the child and makes plans to return to finish the adoption. No commitment can be made regarding time frame.

**Travel:** Two brief trips are required. The first trip is shortly after match to meet the child. The second trip is to process the adoption and take the child home.

**More Information:** Contact Adoption STAR. Toll Free: 1-866-691-3300 or 716-639-3900

[www.adoptionstar.com](http://www.adoptionstar.com) [info@adoptionstar.com](mailto:info@adoptionstar.com)